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FORMER GSA CHIEF OF STAFF DAVID SAFAVIAN SENTENCED TO 18 MONTHS IN PRISON ON CHARGES OF OBSTRUCTION, MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS

WASHINGTON – Former General Services Administration (GSA) Chief of Staff David H. Safavian was sentenced to 18 months in prison on charges of obstructing a GSA proceeding and making false statements, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division announced today.

Safavian was sentenced today by U.S. District Court Judge Paul Friedman of the District of Columbia. A jury convicted Safavian on June 20, 2006, of four charges stemming from an October 2005 indictment, finding that from May 16, 2002 until January 2004, Safavian made false statements and obstructed investigations into his relationship with former Washington lobbyist Jack Abramoff. The investigations focused on whether Safavian, the chief of staff at the GSA from May 2002 until January 2004, aided Abramoff in his attempts to acquire GSA-controlled property in and around Washington, D.C. In August 2002, Abramoff took Safavian and others on a golf trip to Scotland. From November 2004 until September 2005, Safavian had served as the administrator for the Office of Federal Procurement Policy at the Office of Management and Budget.

The jury heard evidence at trial that Safavian made a false statement to a GSA ethics officer claiming that Abramoff had no business with GSA at the time Safavian was planning to travel with the lobbyist to Scotland. He repeated similar statements to a GSA Office of Inspector General special agent and to investigators from the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, again concealing the fact that Abramoff had business before the GSA prior to the August 2002 golf trip and that Safavian was aiding Abramoff in his attempts to do business with GSA.

The case was prosecuted by trial attorneys Peter R. Zeidenberg of the Public Integrity Section and Nathaniel B. Edmonds of the Fraud Section, both part of the Criminal Division at the Department of Justice. The case and the ongoing investigation are being led by special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the GSA Office of Inspector General, the Department of the Interior Office of Inspector General, and the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division.

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